

### **Ex Libris by Joaquin M. Ayala de Cédoz, PhD**

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for June (again, holy cow!!!) 2026! I hope everyone is having a wonderful spring season because ours is behaving more like autumn!

This month I am going to delve into a book that has become a classic tome for card workers (magical stereotypes aside), after which its first print run ended, became highly sought after and very, VERY expensive to obtain. This month, we will focus on *Card Craft – Collected Trickery* by **J. K. (Jerry) Hartman**. It is a 670-page hardcover book originally published in 1991 by **Kaufman & Greenburg** with illustrated drawings by **Joseph K. Schmidt**. There was a total of three (3) print runs.

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This is a book that teaches everything in detail - the routines, the effects, the sleights, etc. Now, it is not self-working magic, but it is the next best things, because J. K. Hartman focuses on effects that minimize the reliance on difficult sleights, lean heavily into clever construction, and impact. This makes the work in the book approachable by all skill levels, but with an impact that is far beyond your basic beginner level card work.

As I previously mentioned, after the first print run of this book sold out, it went out of print. Because of the aforementioned features of the work contained within, and the quality of it, this book demanded ridiculously high sales prices (AND it achieved them, too), but luckily for those who missed out, and even for YOU, dear readers, this book was re-released by **Richard Kaufman** in 2024 in an un-edited fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) print edition. At the time of this writing, it is selling for \$105/USD. Its price in 2024 upon re-release was \$85.00, well under the \$1,000+/USD for the original, out-of-print editions.

NOW, all of that cleared away, what are you getting with this massive book of nothing but card magic? Quite a bit, actually. There are a number of sleights described and taught before you even get into any effects. Rightly so because they are used in what follows their description. In this book you will discover a literal treasure trove of classic plots in card magic, from the classic four-Ace effects to twisting (the Ace) effects, Traveling cards to Collector effects and Sandwich effects. Ambitious Card(s) to Topsy-Turvy Cards, single and multiple Transpositions to plenty of effects inspired directly by **Johann Nepomuk (J. N.) Hofzinsler**.

You have effects that are a variation of the Dunbury Delusion (A FANTASTIC CARD EFFECT!!!) and yet others based on CAAN (Card At A Number) effects, Multiple Selections effects and even more based on one of my absolute favourite plots, the General Card (many handlings by **Hofzinsler, Robert-Houdin, T. Nelson Downs, Ed Marlo, Jon Racherbaumer, etc.** Seriously, look this one up!!!) and even plenty of packet effects. This still only covers UNDER 385 pages of material.

I usually single out some of my favourite effects and sundry things from within each book that I review, but with the massive volume of not only this book, but the straight up stunning quality of the material within, plenty of which I have practiced and performed over the last couple of decades, it is truly hard to pick even just a few. IF you are a card magician that wants strong, impactful magic that does not take decades of dedicated practice, you owe it to yourself to obtain a copy of this book and give it the due diligence of study that it deserves.

That is all for this month, and please be sure to join me again in July where I will focus on a more modern, easily obtainable book within another niche of magic-adjacent subjects – one might say you could... *bet on it!*

-J. M. A.

